

August 1, 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist
Senate Majority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7020

Dear Majority Leader Frist and Minority Leader Reid:

On behalf of Country Music Television (CMT), I am writing you to express our serious concerns with the “Wireless Innovation Networks” title (Title VI) of the pending Senate telecommunications legislation (H.R. 5252) as reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

CMT has been instrumental in guiding and enhancing the development of country music throughout the world; demonstrated it as a viable medium to advertisers, consumers and media; and provides a unity of purpose for the country music industry.

We go to great lengths to understand and cultivate the country music fan base. It is a truism that fans of country music – particularly the millions who watch our network each and every year – expect (and deserve) a top-shelf audio experience as part of the overall music production. Wireless microphones, IFB and PL systems are a central component in our efforts to deliver consumer satisfaction in this area.

Our reliance on this technology is a major reason why we are so concerned about Title VI in H.R. 5252. As currently drafted, the proposed legislation would allow millions of new and potentially interfering devices to operate in the TV spectrum band (where wireless microphones, IFB, PL and broadcast currently operate) in a mere 9 months from the date of enactment – despite the complete lack of any field tests to demonstrate that such devices will not interfere with wireless microphones, or even over-the-air television broadcasts. As Illinois Senator Richard J. Durbin said recently “the FCC and other technical experts ... [must be] allowed sufficient time to thoroughly study and resolve serious interference issues before new services are allowed to be turned on.”

Moreover, the Senate language provides only the thinnest of interference protections for incumbent services like wireless microphones. An “after-the-fact”

FCC complaint process is, at best, unworkable and would expose our industry to significant new risks of low-or-no quality audio due to new “wireless audio congestion.” The millions of U.S. fans of country music artists deserve better.

Based on all of the aforementioned reasons, I urge the Senate to strike Title VI from H.R. 5252 and revisit the issue in a later Congress when the proper engineering experts have had sufficient opportunity to iron out all of the potential interference-related issues.

Sincerely,

Keith Durham
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CMT Technical Operations
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